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# Message Text

SECRET

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44
ACTION ACDA-19

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AEC-11 IO-14 OIC-04 OMB-01 SAJ-01

SAM-01 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /153 W
---------- 109096
R 301209Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4715
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USDEL MBFR VIENNA

S E C R E T BONN 13749

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO, GW
SUBJECT: FRG DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER'S VIEWS ON MBFR

REF: BONN 13574

1. IN A MEETING WITH SENATOR JOHN G. TOWER (R-TEXAS) ON AUGUST 28, FRG DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER DEVOTED A GOOD DEAL OF TIME TO DISCUSSING MBFR MATTERS. HE ADVANCED
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THREE HYPOTHESES TO THE SENATOR REGARDING HOW BE BELIEVES

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THE NEGOTIATIONS COULD EVOLVE FROM THEIR CURRENT STATE. FIRST, BOTH SIDES COULD REMAIN FIRMLY WEDDED TO PRESENT POSITIONS, THEREBY EFFECTIVELY PRECLUDING PROGRESS TOWARD AN AGREEMENT. SECOND, BOTH SIDES COULD ADJUST THEIR POSITIONS ENOUGH TO REACH SOME TYPE OF COMPROMISE AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD MEET THEIR MINIMUM MUTUAL SECURITY REQUIREMENTS. THIRD, THE NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE VIEWED AS A MUCH LONGER TERM PROPOSITION, WITH ONLY LIMITED INITIAL PROGRESS TO BE EXPECTED AS THE TALKS CONTINUE FOR MANY YEARS.

2. LEBER SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY THAT BOTH SIDES COULD PERHAPS MOVE TOWARD THE ACCEPTANCE OF SMALL FORCE REDUC-TIONS AS A WAY OF DEMONSTRATING TO THE RESPECTIVE PUBLICS IN EAST AND WEST THAT PROGRESS COULD BE MADE ON THIS ISSUE. AS LEBER SEES IT, THE FIRST SMALL REDUCTIONS COULD BE FOLLOWED LATER BY ADDITIONAL, STEP-BY-STEP REDUCTIONS WHICH WOULD INVOLVE NO UNNECESSARY RISKS FOR EITHER SIDE. THIS CONCEPT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS MOST CLOSELY RESEMBLES LEBER'S THIRD HYPOTHESIS. HIS BELIEF THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO ABRUPT CHANGES IN THE MILITARY BALANCE IN CENTRAL EUROPE IS CONSISTENT WITH PAST GERMAN THINKING THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS BE APPROACHED VERY CAUTIOUSLY, KEEPING THE ATTENDANT RISKS AS CALCULABLE AS POSSIBLE.

3. IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE GERMAN DEFENSE MINISTER IS ACTIVELY THINKING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SMALL FORCE REDUCTIONS BY BOTH SIDES. HIS IDEA REFLECTS TO A CERTAIN EXTENT THE SYMBOLIC OR LIMITED FIRST STEP REDUCTION PROPOSAL ADVANCED BY THE EASTERN SIDE. FRG DISARMAMENT COMMISSIONER ROTH ALSO SEEMED TO BE THINKING ALONG SIMILAR LINES WHEN HE VOICED THE OPINION THAT CONSIDERATION OF SMALLER SCALE FIRST PHASE REDUCTIONS COULD BE A SOUND APPROACH TO THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME ROTH FELT THAT THE EASTERN SYMBOLIC PROPOSAL POSED A DANGER TO THE WEST (REFTEL). IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT THE DEFMIN'S IDEA ABOUT SMALL FORCE REDUCTIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED WHEN HE MEETS WITH SCHMIDT AND GENSCHER ON SEPTEMBER 9 TO DISCUSS MBFR POLICY
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ISSUES.
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